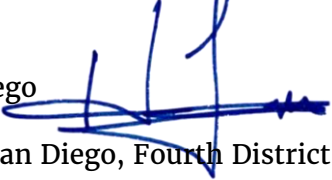




THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 18, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria, City of San Diego 

FROM: Henry L. Foster III, Councilmember, City of San Diego, Fourth District

SUBJECT: Stormwater Management and Storm Preparedness in District Four

This memorandum formally requests the Stormwater Department to prioritize preventative actions and proactive measures for stormwater management and storm preparedness in District Four.

On January 22, 2024, San Diego experienced a significant flooding event that resulted in extensive property damage and resident displacement. Based on recent data, the County of San Diego recorded over 2,600 initial reports of property damage or storm impacts, with 431 residential locations classified as majorly damaged.¹ This event highlights the need for targeted, preventative stormwater management measures to protect vulnerable areas and ensure resident safety in District Four. Thus, as the rainy season begins in the San Diego region, it is essential to take proactive steps to prepare for potential heavy rainfall and flooding.

Deployment and Execution

To ensure these preparedness and response measures are implemented effectively, our office recommends that the Stormwater Department establish a detailed deployment and execution plan. This plan should outline specific protocols for deploying teams to high-risk areas, designate staging locations for equipment and sandbag distribution, and detail coordination with emergency response units. Clear responsibilities and timelines for each response phase—from pre-storm preparation to post-storm recovery—will be essential for ensuring quick and efficient action during heavy rain events.

¹ 2024 Winter Storm Emergency - Weekly Temporary Lodging Summary - City of San Diego: [City EOC Exec Brief Report_05202024.pdf \(alertsandiego.org\)](#)

Enhanced Stormwater Infrastructure and Maintenance

Our office requests that the Stormwater Department prioritize clearing storm drains, catch basins, and drainage channels within District Four, particularly in flood-prone areas, to prevent future blockages. Proactive maintenance of culverts, ditches, and retention basins is essential for effective runoff management and street flood prevention. Consideration should also be given to upgrading aging infrastructure in high-risk areas to improve resilience and drainage capacity.

Proactive Flood Modeling and Risk Assessment

To better prepare for heavy rainfall events, the department is encouraged to use flood risk assessment tools and Geographic Information System mapping to identify vulnerable areas within the district. Additionally, implementing real-time monitoring systems in critical locations could help detect rising water levels and facilitate a timely and effective response.

Community Education and Preparedness

Community awareness and preparedness are crucial to reducing flood impacts. We request that public awareness campaigns be launched to educate residents in flood-prone areas on effective sandbagging, drainage maintenance, and other flood preparedness measures. The department should also make clear, accessible information about flood risk areas, emergency contacts, and available resources on its website.

Rainy Season Preparation

Establishing a “Rain Ready” campaign before the rainy season begins would enable both City departments and residents to prepare adequately. Our office requests that sandbag distribution stations be set up in advance for at-risk neighborhoods and guidance on sandbag use be provided to help protect homes and businesses effectively.

Emergency Response and Rapid Deployment

To better address real-time issues during storm events, we encourage the Stormwater Department to develop rapid response teams to monitor and clear blockages in high-risk areas. Collaboration with community volunteers for patrols during storm events could also support immediate response efforts, helping the department manage storm conditions and prevent further flooding. Deploy debris assistance teams to help clear storm drains, gutters, and trash bins to prevent debris accumulation, reduce health hazards, and ensure proper drainage during the rainy season.

Communication and Coordination

A clear and timely communication plan is essential during extreme weather events. We recommend the department develop a communication plan to provide residents with real-time updates on flooded areas, road closures, and safety instructions. Cross-departmental coordination with public works, transportation, Council offices, emergency management, community planning groups, and other community-based organizations will also ensure a unified and effective response, and we encourage collaboration with state and federal agencies when additional resources are required.

Therefore, this memorandum formally requests the Stormwater Department to prioritize preventative actions and proactive measures for stormwater management and heavy rain preparedness in District Four. Implementing these strategies is essential to safeguarding our community, preventing future flood impacts, and ensuring that District Four residents are protected and well-supported in the face of extreme weather events.

By prioritizing these actions, the City of San Diego can enhance resilience in its stormwater management efforts, reduce flood risks, and better support District Four residents in preparation for future storm events.

We appreciate your attention to these critical needs and look forward to seeing these measures put into action.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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cc: Paola Avila, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Eric Dargan, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Mayor
Charles Modica, Independent Budget Analyst
Kris McFadden, Deputy Chief Operating Officer of Infrastructure
Todd Snyder, Director of Stormwater, City of San Diego
Daniel Horton, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Henry L. Foster III